

Announcement of Federal Funding for Norton Sewer System Improvement

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Norton, Virginia

April 26, 2010

I am pleased to return to Norton today to announce a major provision of federal funding which will enable the City of Norton to significantly improve the City's wastewater infrastructure, providing more efficient sewer service for Norton residents and allowing for future growth in the number of businesses and residents in the City and Wise County.

At my urging, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development Agency, is providing a total of \$5,186,000 to the City of Norton to improve its wastewater system. Of that total amount, \$3,889,000 is being provided as a grant, and \$1,297,000 is being provided in the form of a low-interest, federal loan.

Safe and reliable wastewater systems are essential to maintaining Southwest Virginia's excellent quality of life and critical to meeting our economic development goals for the region. For these reasons, I work actively with local governments to secure the funding necessary to construct and improve the region's wastewater infrastructure.

I have been working with the City of Norton to secure federal funds for a major rehabilitation of the City's wastewater system for several years. In 2008, the City completed a Comprehensive Sewer Study, which revealed that many of the City's sewer lines were aging and failing. As a result, the City contributes more than 365 million gallons each year of infiltration and inflow to the Coeburn-Norton-Wise regional wastewater treatment plant, which serves the City and portions of Wise County. The infiltration and inflow, which is due to storm water entering the

wastewater system, has caused the wastewater treatment capacity at that plant to become greatly diminished.

A major wastewater system improvement project is necessary to reduce the infiltration and inflow, operate Norton's sewer system more efficiently and enable new opportunities for business and commercial development in the City. In addition, creating more treatment capacity at the treatment plant and the wastewater interceptors that serve the plant will enable Wise County to pursue economic development opportunities, including further developing the Esserville Industrial Park, the Guest River-Stevens area and the area along Route 757 called Hamilton Town. All of these areas are in need of more wastewater treatment capacity before development can occur.

The federal funding announced today will make this new development possible by enabling the City of Norton to significantly improve its wastewater system. With the benefit of the federal funds, the City will completely replace its main sewer interceptor line, the Guest River Sewer Interceptor, from the point of connection to the Coeburn-Norton-Wise Regional Wastewater System in Ramsey to Esserville. The interceptor replacement will include the installation of 17,250 feet of new wastewater lines as well as new manholes.

In addition, the Benges Branch Sewer Interceptor, which serves the Powell River Watershed in the City's wastewater system, will be replaced with 8,325 feet of new sewer lines. The federal funds announced today will also provide \$120,000 to further identify failing sewer lines throughout the City for potential future replacement.

The total cost of Norton's wastewater improvement project is more than \$8.7 million. In addition to the \$5,186,000 announced today, the City has received \$1 million from the Virginia General Assembly, and \$2 million from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. The remaining funds will be provided by the City of Norton.

Construction on the City's wastewater improvement project is expected to begin in 2011. When completed, Norton residents will broadly benefit from the more efficient wastewater service and the new opportunities for development throughout the City and Wise County created by this project.

There are several individuals who deserve our thanks today for their excellent work to improve Norton's wastewater system.

I want to thank Travis Jackson, regional representative for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency. Travis' efforts are critical to securing funding for projects throughout the Ninth Congressional District.

I also want to thank Ernie Ward and Fred Ramey, the Manager and Assistant Manager of the City of Norton. Ernie and Fred deserve our appreciation today for their hard work toward obtaining the funding for this project.

I would also like to thank William Mays, Mayor of Norton, for his efforts on behalf the project.

I also want to thank Skip Skinner and the excellent staff at LENOWISCO Planning District Commission for their continuing efforts on behalf of Southwest Virginia residents.

William Wampler and Terry Kilgore, who represent Norton in the Virginia General Assembly, also deserve our appreciation today for their work to secure the state funds for this project.

Finally, I would like to thank my Project Manager Derek Lyall for his efforts to expand the availability of water and wastewater services across the Congressional District.

The federal funds announced today will enable a major rehabilitation of the City of Norton's sewer system, and, as a result, new economic development opportunities will arise in the City and in Wise County. I want to thank all here for their efforts on behalf of this project.